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# **Women leaders in the political field in Scotland: a socio-historical approach to the emergence of leaders**

## **Authors:**

**Sarah Robinson**

**University of Glasgow**

[Sarah.Robinson.2@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Robinson.2@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Ron Kerr**

**University of Edinburgh**

[ron.kerr@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ron.kerr@ed.ac.uk)

## **Introduction**

This study responds to a call for papers for the International Studying Leadership Conference (Edinburgh 2015) to ‘rethink leadership research<sup>1</sup>. We address this call by providing an example of how a turn to historical methods can help leadership scholars ‘move away from ideas of individual agency and control, and take into account the power relations that shape the more emergent processes of organising and change’ (Harrison, 2016). This move might involve, we suggest, looking to the past to understand the present. We therefore present an approach to leadership studies that combines history, sociology and politics, in identifying ‘emergent processes of organisation and change’ (Harrison, 2016). In so doing, we also respond to calls to bring together sociological and historical approaches (Calhoun, 2013; Hobsbawm, 2016) in order to write a ‘social history of the present’ (Bourdieu, 1995: 111).

We start with the following event. In August 2015, the election of Kezia Dugdale as leader of the Labour Party in Scotland meant that, for the first time the leaders of the three main political parties in the Scottish Parliament were women: in addition to Dugdale, the governing Scottish National Party was led by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and the Scottish Conservatives by Ruth Davidson. How might this unprecedented event be understood? We approach this question, first, through a critique of aspects of leadership studies as a field; and through a consideration of the potential for socio-historical approaches to counteract its dominant naturalism and universalism. Then, as an example of an

alternative approach, we apply Bourdieu's concepts – in particular *the political field* - to the empirical case in question in order to historicise its conditions of possibility. Finally, we consider how the three leaders position themselves in relation to their parties and to each other within that field.

To do this, we develop the following research questions. What are the social conditions of possibility of the emergence of women as political leaders in Scotland? And what does the ascendancy of women to positions of political power tell us about the political field as constituted in Scotland and the UK? To address these questions, we start not with the figures of the leaders themselves (the biological individuals occupying these political positions), but with the conditions of possibility of their emergence, with a particular focus on the social movements and civic society groups that came together to campaign for a devolved Scottish Parliament in the years 1979-1999. That is, we argue, the emergence of women as political leaders is the result of collective action over time: these leaders did not appear from nowhere fully-formed and their emergence cannot be explained by the individual agency of the leader alone; similarly, the successes of the civic society groups and of the women's movement in shaping the political field cannot be explained by the actions of individual leaders within these groups and movements.

Therefore, as we will argue, the production of women leaders was an unintended consequence of these campaigns. Although the civic society campaigns and the women's movement brought together individuals with cultural and social capital in the most influential national fields in Scotland (law, the churches, business, trade unions, academia, etc.), these individuals had no formal or elected leadership positions in the devolution campaigns. Indeed, paradoxically, the devolution campaigns were not concerned with political leadership *per se*, but with ideas such as democracy, equality, the nation; and, indeed, members of the women's movement were ideologically opposed to hierarchical leadership, considering it a form of masculine domination (Lovenduski and Randall 1993). This means that focusing on 'leadership' as a heuristic to understand the past will fail to reveal the processes by which leaders emerged. Our contribution to leadership studies is therefore to show the value of combining explicit social theory with historical methods in order to produce a social history of the present, and in

particular the value of field theory in understanding the conditions of possibility for the emergence of contemporary leaders (Kerr and Robinson, 2011).

This Bourdieusian approach also requires us to reflect on our own positions both in the academic field as management and organization scholars and personally in relation to changes in the field of power in Scotland. This is because the authors are currently academics at Scottish universities; trying to make sense of these changes. In the next section, we explain why we think contemporary leadership studies needs to consider how it approaches history.

### **Historical approaches to leadership studies**

In addressing the event of the simultaneous rise of three women to leadership positions in Scottish politics we have been struck by the following paradox: the study of leadership ought to be ideally suited to the use of historiographical methods and approaches, yet these methods are almost totally absent from the dominant sector of leadership studies. We therefore face a puzzle: why has contemporary mainstream leadership studies been so resistant to historical approaches? For example, the recent *Routledge Companion to Leadership* (edited by Storey, Hartley, Denis, 't Hart and Ulrich, 2017) does not include any chapters that look specifically at history. How, we ask, might this be explained?

Setting aside the vast non-academic literature on leaders and leadership, leadership studies as an academic field conforms to the self-consciously 'scientific' paradigm that dominates the social sciences and political sciences in the United States (Ross, 1992; Abbott, 1998; Steinmetz, 2011), exhibiting a neglect of issues of power and a suspicion of the intrusion of values (as being 'ideological') into research (Ross, 1992; Tourish 2011; Collinson, 2014).

This positivist dominance is evident from a scan of *Leadership Quarterly (LQ)*, which, would appear to be the pre-eminent journal in the field, at least if judged by performative measures such as impact factors and journal rankings, rather than by an assessment of the journal's content: see Tourish 2011

for a critique of the deleterious effects on the field of this approach to academic journal ranking. So, for the *Leadership Quarterly*'s editors, the study of leadership is a 'mature science': 'leadership and leader performance are not a matter of opinion but rather a matter of fact... leadership research is a scientific discipline' (Atwater et al., 2014). That is, as a discipline, leadership studies can be understood as a universalistic, nomothetic, essentialist, 'variables-based paradigm' (Abbott, 1998). It is also a decontextualized approach to leaders and leadership that neglects those issues of power and emergence noted by Harrison (2016).

Methodologically, then, *Leadership Quarterly*'s editorial line has a strong preference for experimental psychological methods rather than the kind of contextualised case study that can get to grips with power and emergence. Thus, although, according to a 25-year review of 'qualitative studies and historiometrics' published in the journal, a certain (small) number of qualitative studies has appeared (Parry et al., 2014), the authors conclude that 'quantitative research will almost certainly continue to enjoy methodological hegemony within the field for many years'. This means that, in terms of publication in *Leadership Quarterly*, historical approaches are represented entirely by 'historiometrics' (Parry et al., 2014): an approach defined by one of its chief proponents as 'the method of testing nomothetic hypotheses concerning human behaviour by applying quantitative analyses to data abstracted from historical populations' (Simonton, 1984: 3). This approach originated in the early 20thC as a way of researching topics such as the basis of 'genius' in 'inherited' IQ (historiometrics has a historical relationship with eugenics, Francis Galton being the common ancestor). As such, contemporary historiometrics is a cousin of psychometric testing and Murray's 'Bell Curve' theory. It is therefore interesting to note that, in its 25-year existence, *Leadership Quarterly* has published 20 historiometric studies (Parry et al., 2014), including a recent paper, based on biographical data, on the likelihood of certain types of leaders being assassinated (Yammarino et al., 2013). This is in contrast to no published studies at all based on historical methods.

The domination of the field by quantitative and statistically-based methods has evoked a response from critical leadership scholars (Collinson, 2014), establishing an alternative position based around the journal *Leadership* (founded in 2005). In this paper, then, and situating ourselves as critical

leadership scholars, we position our study in relation to a historic as well as historical event: one that does not focus on a single leader but on the simultaneous emergence of three women leaders. And this, we argue, presents a challenge both to ‘history’ understood as a series of contingent events and to methodological individualism, including the ‘Great Man’ theory of history (recently critiqued by Spector 2016). In order to do this, we take an approach to leadership studies that brings together history, sociology and politics under the aegis of Bourdieu (for Bourdieu and history see Gorski, 2013 a, b; Steinmetz, 2011; Swartz, 2013; Susen, 2015; and Hobsbawm, 2016).

The theoretical question that faces us is, how to bring together three central concepts that drove the historical movements under consideration: namely, feminism, democratic politics and the nation; and in order to do this we apply Bourdieu’s concept of the *political field*, understood as a specific form of social field (Bourdieu, 1985, 2000, 2005, 2012; Brubaker, 1996; Swartz, 2013). For Bourdieu, social fields (including the political field) are ‘spaces of relationships’ between dominant and dominated groups (Bourdieu, 1985; Kerr and Robinson, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. However, in order to enter into, and operate successfully within, a specific field, different *forms of capital* are needed, as well as a field-adapted *habitus*. So what is at stake in the political field is control of the state apparatus by political agents, and this is achieved by mobilising social capital, e.g., social networks and systems of patronage, and by the acquisition of symbolic capital (e.g., public credit, trust) (Swartz, 2013). These forms of capital can then be deployed by a field-adapted habitus that operates in a given field as a *sens pratique*, defined as a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1980: 117). The habitus can then be understood as a set of dispositions already acquired by an individual through socialisation (via family, education, political activism, etc.) and that ‘consists of a set of historical relations “deposited” within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporal schematic perception, appreciation and action’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:16; Kerr and Robinson, 2009). The successful political habitus then (that of a leader, say), is one that is attuned to the dominant practices and beliefs of that field (Swartz, 2013).

But all political spaces are not (or are not yet) fields: fields are relational social spaces, structured spaces of position and political contention. In terms of political leaders and leadership then, a

Bourdieuian approach would focus on positional and relational field analysis, and on processes of delegation and consecration (by a political party), as well as on individual habitus and social trajectory. That is, the political habitus – and the political leader – does not appear *ex nihilo*: for example, in the UK, Conservative and Labour party members and activists were, until the 1990s, drawn from different and contrasting educational and class backgrounds but were predominantly male. Further, a habitus and its dispositions is embodied in a corporal hexis, a way of physical being in the world: ‘a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking’ (Bourdieu, 1990b: 69-70). And given that the normative 20<sup>th</sup> Century political habitus/hexis has been masculine (wearing a suit, tie, and so on), an established political field will operate in ways that facilitate the inclusion of certain social agents (those that ‘fit’) and the exclusion of others; many of the latter being self-excluded (as ‘not for the likes of us’, Bourdieu, 1990b).

Similarly, the formative experience of participation in one or more social movements aids the development of a *radical habitus* (Crossley, 2003), a ‘feel’ for the ‘game’ of protest and campaigning that allows social agents ‘to derive purpose and enjoyment from it, to “believe” in it and to feel “at home” doing it’ (Crossley, 2003). However, although such activists operate outside the political field *per se*, they do aim to influence the configuration of that field and the field of power: the latter according to Bourdieu (1990a, 2012) being ‘precisely the arena ... where the relative value of diverse species of power is contested and adjudicated’ (Wacquant, 2005: 44). Here, Bourdieu (as summarised by Wacquant) is thinking about power at the level of the state.

Conceptually speaking, the *nation state* has long been the main building block of political studies (Bourdieu, 2012). However, given that Scotland is, in Bogdanor’s terms a ‘historic nation’ but not a fully-developed nation state (Bogdanor, 1999), field theory as used by Brubaker to study emergent post-Soviet nation states is particularly relevant to our focus. For Brubaker (1996: 17) then, ‘nationalism is not engendered by nations... it is induced - by *political fields* of particular kinds’ (emphasis in original). Similarly, Eyal in a study of the Czech-Slovak ‘velvet divorce’ of 1993, shows how the emergence of two new nation states was ‘caused by the polarized manner in which social and class conflicts were *transposed* from social space onto the political field’ (2005: 151).

From a Bourdieusian perspective then, the campaign for a Scottish parliament can be understood as a special case in which ideas of nationalism, feminism and democracy came together in the genesis and configuration of a new political field that would eventually facilitate the emergence of women leaders.

Finally, we turn to the formation and reproduction of fields and the role of practices, positions and dispositions in this. For Bourdieu, a political field is a field of battle in which polarised politicians and parties contend for domination. This view of politics as inherently agonistic would tend to support Mouffe's contention that democratic politics is in itself a matter of adversarial conflict (Mouffe, 2000) rather than an arena of deliberative democracy: although each political field is in itself a matter for empirical study to ascertain how politics operates within it (Adler-Nissen, 2012). So how the political field in Scotland was formed, what practices were involved in its formation and operation and how women emerged as leaders within it are historical questions: we go on to address these in subsequent sections of this paper.

### **Methodology: historical sociology**

Our object of study is not 'leadership' understood as a universal phenomenon, but rather the processes by which individuals are enabled to attain the position of 'leader'. In order to do this, we first bracket the individual 'leaders' in order to establish the conditions of possibility of their emergence. We thus connect the emergence of individual leaders (Sturgeon, Davidson and Dugdale) with wider social and political movements and processes, including the role of civic society groups and feminist activists, in promoting the formation of a new political field in Scotland.

Methodologically, we respond to recent calls to bring together historical approaches with sociology (Bourdieu, 1995, Calhoun, 2013; Hobsbawm, 2016) and with politics (Swartz, 2013). In particular, we respond to Bourdieu's call for sociology and history to come together in writing a 'social history of the present' (Bourdieu 1995, 111); for Bourdieu and history see also Gorski (2013 a, b), Steinmetz (2011), Swartz (2013), and Susen (2015). Our approach then is to historicise and thus denaturalise the taken for granted, the way things are, what appears as 'self-evident, commonsensical, and only natural' (Swartz, 2013: 22). This is because such a challenge opens the way to a critical perspective



on the present: in that ‘the social world is always being made, unmade, or held in place by real social actors, that it was different in the past and can be (made to be, though not easily) different in the future’ (Ortner, 2013).

Methodologically, we followed the recommendations of historical sociologist Charle (2013; see also Kerr, Robinson and Elliott, 2016) by posing and answering the following questions: what are the *problematics* that we want to address?; and how do we understand – or construct – *the object of research*? Our problematic is, how women became political leaders in Scotland; while our object of research is the genesis and development of the political field in Scotland that facilitated this process. We focus on Scotland because it provides a microcosm – a special case – in which to study the role of politics, gender and the nation in the formation of a new political field.

We then identified and clarified two further questions of scale (Charle, 2013). These were the *scale of division*, namely Scotland; and the *scale of time*, in this case the period from 1979 to 2015. We discuss Scotland in detail below, but for the scale of time or periodisation, a way of organising historical events, we cover the period from 1979, when the first Scottish devolution referendum was lost and the Thatcher government came to power in the UK, until 2015, when Kezia Dugdale became leader of the Scottish Labour Party.

To do this, we draw on historical documents; interpretations of the period by academics; and contemporaneous and retrospective accounts by those involved. We consulted the House of Commons Library, in particular Gay, Winetrobe and Wood (1995), ‘The Government of Scotland: Recent Proposals’; and the websites of the Scottish Government and the Institute of Government.

Many of the key documents relating to the foundation of the Scottish parliament are collected in Paterson (1998); in particular, Brown and Strachan (1991). Another key document, ‘A Claim of Right for Scotland’ was issued as a pamphlet in 1988: Dudley Edwards (1991) includes the 1988 document, with an introduction and 15 essays from various political and academic perspectives (all written by men). The response to this male-dominated ‘Claim of Right’ from the Woman’s Claim of Right Group is contained in ‘A Woman’s Claim of Right’ (1991). This comprises thirteen chapters, all

by women, and includes important essays on women and politics in Scotland by, *inter alia*, Lindsay (1991), Hersh (1991), and Collie, Hoare and Roddick (1991).

A number of important articles on Scottish politics appeared in the Scottish Government Yearbook. This was published annually (1977-1992) by the 'Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland' in Edinburgh and provided a forum for writers on the political process in Scotland (see discussion in Miller et al., 2010). The main articles from the Yearbook that we draw on are: Breitenbach (1990); Conroy (1992); Kellas (1992); Levy (1992); and 'The final report of the Scottish Constitutional Convention' (1992)<sup>3</sup>.

Breitenbach's (1990) study of the Scottish Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) from a participant's perspective complements the slightly later and more general account by Lovenduski and Randall (1993). Both provide invaluable insight into developments and debates within the WLM as they were seen at that time. More recently, Browne (2014) provides a retrospective account of the WLM in Scotland, drawing on Breitenbach for the period 1970-1990. Finally, we consulted autobiographies by, and biographies of, key players, including those of Kenyon Wright (1997); Maria Fyfe (2014); and Nicola Sturgeon (Torrance 2014).

In choosing to focus on this leadership event, we take the context Scotland as a special, exemplary case for sociological and historical analysis. Starting from the event (the simultaneous emergence of three women leaders), we identify the mechanisms that facilitated this, the individuals and social movements involved, and the genesis of a new political field that made the event possible. In so doing, we are conscious of the dangers of presentism, i.e. of reading our present preoccupations into the past, in particular in relation to leadership. This is because, as noted above, the social and civic movements were driven by ideas of the nation, equality and democracy – the emergence of leaders was a by-product, as it were, of many causal factors, not a primary consideration for those involved at the time.

Finally, given our position within the academic field – the field of leadership studies - and our positions as academics at Scottish Universities, we need to be reflexive in how we make sense of the

political scene and the changing field of power in Scotland: the events that we are studying here have had – and will have – effects on our lives and our work (we return to this theme in our discussion section).

### **Scotland: the politics of the union state**

In order to understand the formation of a new political field in Scotland and the emergence of women as leaders within it, we first need to understand the specificity of Scotland as a ‘historic nation’ that is not a *nation state*, before we turn to the political developments that led to the various campaigns for a devolved parliament and/or Scottish independence. Briefly then, Scotland is one of the ‘kingdoms’ of the United Kingdom (UK), a ‘historic’ nation, but not a wholly independent or fully-developed *nation state* (Bogdanor, 1999; Williams, 1996). The UK is not, therefore, in itself a nation state or ‘unitary state’ (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982), but rather a ‘union state’ or (according to Mitchell, 2010) ‘a state of unions’. That is, while the political Union of Scotland and England in 1707 brought together two politically independent nations under a union parliament in London, Scotland maintained a continuing national identity based on ‘a relatively autonomous civil society’ (McCrone, 2005: 68).

In constructing and reproducing this continuing identity, a powerful role was played by certain ‘nodal’ institutions (Sewell, 1999). These included the Church of Scotland (the Kirk), the legal and educational systems, and the media and the financial institutions. In Bourdieu’s terms, these are fields with their own hierarchies (relational positions) and recognised forms of capital (dispositions). The leading figures of those relatively autonomous fields (lawyers, bankers, academics, etc.) are therefore those whose social and cultural capital is recognised within their own fields. However, in the continuing absence of a political field in Scotland, these field representatives were able, in the period 1979-1997, to cooperate across fields to prepare the way for new more democratic arrangements. In this way, they formed Scottish ‘civic society’, a sort of proto ‘field of power’ (Bourdieu 2012).

In the absence of a Scottish political field post-1707 the main route for aspirant Scottish politicians to attain political advancement, and ultimately political leadership, was through election to the UK parliament from one of the Scottish constituencies– although Scots could and did stand in English

constituencies and vice versa. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the two main parties of government in the UK were the Conservative and Labour parties, with smaller parties represented to a greater or lesser extent from election to election. Male politicians from Scotland followed this route to political leadership in the UK (former Prime Minister Gordon Brown for example). But the route was restricted, with differential participation by, in particular, women: indeed, as far as Scottish constituencies are concerned, from 1918 to 1992, only 21 women - 11 Labour, 6 Conservative, 3 SNP and 1 Liberal Democrat – were elected to Westminster (Levy, 1992)<sup>4</sup>.

However, the United Kingdom's political settlement came under pressure in the 1970s, as evidenced by the rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP) with its aim of national independence. The growing success of the SNP threatened Labour's political hegemony in Scotland, and thus the party's potential to govern the UK (Hassan and Shaw, 2012). Establishing a Scottish Parliament or Assembly with devolved political powers would provide a way of dealing with this threat and of perpetuating Labour dominance in Scotland. So, although the UK Labour party was divided on devolution, with a minority of MPs implacably opposed, proposals for a Scottish assembly were put to a referendum in Scotland in 1979. However, despite returning a majority for devolution, the vote in favour failed to reach the 40% of the electorate required to pass and was therefore lost. The election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives followed in 1979. Thatcher was opposed to devolution and her right-wing policies were unpopular in Scotland, as can be seen from subsequent General Elections in which the Conservative party steadily lost its Scottish seats: in 1983, the Labour/Conservative split was 44 seats/22 seats; in 1987, 41/ 21; in 1992, 50/10; in 1997, 49/11; and in 1997, 56/0. So, as the Conservative vote in Scotland declined, the legitimacy of the UK government vis-à-vis Scotland appeared increasingly illegitimate: this came to be known as the 'democratic deficit' (Macwhirter, 1990). In response, civic society would mobilise, campaigning for a more democratic, egalitarian and representative form of democracy in Scotland, as would the women's movement. From the conjuncture of these movements a new political field would be created that would offer increased opportunities for political participation and leadership for the excluded and self-excluded, women in particular.

### **The Thatcher years: addressing Scotland's 'democratic deficit'**

In the 1970s, however, the campaign for a devolved Scottish parliament had been primarily a Labour Party initiative, intended to counteract the electoral success of the SNP (as evidenced by the election of Winnie Ewing to Westminster in 1973), and the growing pressure from the SNP for independence. At this time, the SNP's membership was 'largely professional, university-educated, interested in literature and culture' (Russell 2016: 29); those in official leadership positions came from this kind of background, and the party's official leaders maintained their professional careers while taking on the role (see Mitchell and Hassan 2016). That is, the SNP was primarily a single-issue campaign rather than a political party, and as such did not need a formal leader with a developed political habitus. Ewing however, although not in any formal leadership position, maintained a powerful symbolic role – what Bourdieu calls 'personal political capital' (Swartz, 2013) - that she was able to transpose through election to the European Parliament and later, the Scottish Parliament.

However, as noted above, however, although the first campaign for Scottish devolution culminated in failure in the 1979 referendum and the subsequent electoral setback for the SNP, the issue reappeared in the 1980s, this time in response to the Thatcherite hegemony and the 'democratic deficit' in Scotland. Disparate calls and campaigns for a devolved assembly or parliament that would more accurately voice the concerns of the Scottish people were now taken up and organised under the aegis of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (1979-1989).

This body, led by a 'volunteer committee' of representatives of Scottish 'civic society', brought together representatives of political parties, the Scottish churches, local government and social movements (Miller, Rodger and Dudley Edwards, 2010: 209). The Campaign's members were neither elected nor formally delegated – they were members of their own autonomous fields whose social and cultural capital, already accumulated in their own fields such as law, trade unions, local government, the churches, business, endowed them with symbolic capital as national representatives of the stateless nation. That is, these individuals were 'leading figures' in civic society, but not 'leaders' in any formally recognised way. So the campaign was an elite initiative, albeit that of a peripheral, subaltern elite – claiming a 'right' to a more democratic system of government for Scotland.

The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly's efforts culminated in the publication and signing of 'A Claim of Right for Scotland' (1989). The Claim of Right was collectively authored by a civic society group that included retired civil servants, journalists, representatives of the churches, trade unionists, academics (including legal academics), and cultural workers (Dudley Edwards 1991: 1-2). The final document included the following statement on the lack of democratic legitimacy in the governance of Scotland: 'Scotland is facing a crisis of identity and survival. It is being governed without consent'. The signatories to the Claim therefore pledged 'To agree a scheme for an Assembly or Parliament for Scotland' and 'To mobilise Scottish opinion and ensure the approval of the Scottish people for that scheme'. Responsibility for mobilising public opinion in favour of an assembly was delegated to the newly-formed Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC) (Conroy 1992). The SCC's membership included Scottish politicians, trade union members, intellectuals, local councillors, representatives of small businesses, of the churches, and of the women's movement (Gay et al., 1995:5; we pick up the role of the women's movement in the following section). There were notable absences however: the Conservatives did not participate and, because national independence was not on the Convention's agenda, SNP members withdrew (Wright, 1997). As we shall see, these absences facilitated the search for consensus within the SCC.

Although claiming to speak for the Scottish people, the SCC was an elite initiative: participation was determined by symbolic capital recognised across fields, not by election or formal delegation. The SCC's official leadership was ceremonial: the Joint Chairs being the well-known politicians Harry Ewing (Labour), and Sir David Steel (Liberal), but most of the decisions were taken by the executive steering committee chaired by Canon Kenyon Wright, a Methodist clergyman and General Secretary of the Scottish Churches Council.

Wright was not a politician. He had however been an activist in the ecumenical peace movement in the 1980s in Eastern Europe and had witnessed the important role the churches played in promoting democracy in the final days of Soviet domination (Wright, 1997). In the absence of a political field in Scotland, the Church of Scotland had positioned itself as a national democratic voice on social and political matters. The Kirk's egalitarian ethos included an institutional opposition to hierarchical

leadership: the Kirk is Presbyterian by confession, and opposed to ecclesiastical authority as such (its symbolic leader, the Moderator, is elected annually, and serves a single term only) (Macdonald, 1991). Arguably, the Kirk's egalitarian democratic tradition fed into the devolution campaign as a preference for consensus-based decision-making and a rejection by implication of 'strong' leaders. So, under the consensus-seeking leadership of Wright (Gay et al., 1995), the SCC aimed not just at setting up a new parliament but also at introducing new ways of doing politics: 'The Convention... emphasised the need for a more pluralistic and participative politics than existed at Westminster' (Cairney and Johnson 2012: 94).

This kind of anti-hierarchical thinking paralleled the political thinking coming from the women's movement at this time. Both movements were suspicious of hierarchical leadership (in the women's case, considered as 'masculine' or 'macho'), and defined themselves not only against Thatcherism as a political philosophy but also against Margaret Thatcher's strong form of leadership. This meant that the political aims of the women's movement in Scotland now aligned with the aims of the Convention. Consequently, the main feminist political strategy was to mobilise the Scottish constitutional movement's 'democratic deficit' discourse to promote women's participation in politics, and so to overcome what was called at the time the 'gender deficit' (Lindsay, 1991).

### **Devolution and the WLM in Scotland: from distrust to convergence**

To understand how this 'gender deficit' was addressed by the women's movement and how feminist ideas that challenged traditional modes of masculine leadership paradoxically contributed to the formation of a new political field in which women leaders could flourish, we first need to outline the development of the Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland. The history of the WLM is recounted in detail both by Breitenbach (1990), writing from the perspective of a participant, and retrospectively by Browne (2014). Both writers track the movement's beginnings in the 1970s in 'consciousness raising' groups, and discuss feminist ideas about organizational practices, including an ideological antipathy to leaders and formal leadership, understood as forms of patriarchal authority. Indeed, Lovenduski and Randall (1991) are quite explicit on how 'the anti-hierarchical ethos of the 1970s' influenced what they characterise as 'the feminist distaste for competition and... ambivalence

about the mobilization of feminists to support women's ascent to powerful political positions' (Lovenduski and Randall 1991: 143).

However, some Scottish feminist voices were beginning to be raised in favour of political involvement in the independence movement: Browne, for example, quotes an article in the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal* from 1978 on the potential for a coming together of Scottish politics and women's issues: 'wheels are grinding towards an independent Scotland' the article claims. The author goes on: 'How can we say party politics are no use... there is a tremendous opportunity for government not only to reflect the needs of the people more closely, but those of women as well' (quoted in Browne, 2014:103).

Nevertheless, the dominant view of the WLM was that the 1979 devolution referendum in Scotland was at best 'irrelevant' to women's interests, in part because of concerns about continuing reactionary influences in Scottish society (for example, the Catholic Church in relation to abortion) (Breitenbach 1990). The exception here was the Scottish Convention of Women (SCOW) 'one of the few groups which attempted to raise the question of attitudes to women's representation in a Scottish Assembly' (Levy, 1992). This group, formed in 1977, 'had a small membership based on representatives from trade unions, local groups including the Women's Guilds, and individuals, with the aim of promoting the quality of life for all women and men' (Levy, 1992: 63). Different strands of feminism were represented in SCOW, with members possessing very different social trajectories and ideological positions. For example, one of its leading members was Maidie Hart, a Christian feminist and 'quiet revolutionary', who favoured organizational inclusivity (Ewan, Innis and Reynolds, 2006: 162).

According to Lovenduski and Randall (1993), there were three main ideological groupings in the women's movement in Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s. These can be characterised (in terms used at the time) as *liberal feminism*, *socialist feminism*, and *institutional feminism*. Each of these involved different perspectives on politics and leadership. From the perspective of liberal feminism, gender inequality in politics can best be addressed by the provision of the legal right to stand for parliament (Rottenberg, 2014). Following this individualistic and 'meritocratic' path would allow women to



attain leadership positions in the same way as men. Of course, this perspective assumes that women can accumulate the requisite forms of capital that facilitate political success.

On the other hand, socialist feminism contends that, in order for women to succeed in politics, issues of redistributive justice need to be addressed, in particular issues of social oppression that prevent women's full participation in political life (Fraser, 2012). That is, given that equality is the dominant value for socialists, legal measures are required to promote equal representation for women in the political field: for example, 50/50 quotas or all-women shortlists for election candidates might be introduced. In principle, measures such as these would facilitate women's political participation and so help to promote 'women's issues' within the current political dispensation (abortion rights, childcare, action against male violence for example). Removing these barriers would, it follows, work against the exclusion and self-exclusion of women, so facilitating the entry of more women into leadership positions.

Finally, institutional feminists argued that, because politics in Britain was dominated by confrontational 'masculine' values and practices that tended to exclude women, an alternative 'feminised', more co-operative and less hierarchical form of politics was necessary (Acker, 1990; Norris, 1996; Lovenduski, 1997). From this, it followed that feminists could attempt to 'infiltrate' masculine political institutions, to make them 'carriers of feminist ideas and values' (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993: 135). From a leadership perspective then, this approach would necessitate a consensus-building, feminized style of 'new politics' as opposed to a dominant masculine model of leadership.

However, in the 1980s the WLM fragmented. This was in part because of internal disagreements between the different strands of feminism, but also because the coming to power of the Conservatives led by Margaret Thatcher faced women with the novel challenge of a social reactionary politics combined with ultra-liberal economic politics. At any rate, as both Lovenduski and Randall and Browne argue, post-1979 many feminist activists moved into the Labour party and the trade union movement: see Short (1996) for an account of the impact of socialist feminism in and on the Labour Party in the 1980s and early 1990s. For example, the Woman's Network of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee – an organisation of the Labour Left - included women activists whose acquired skills of

chairing meetings, public speaking and so on, would allow them to take on leadership positions in the Labour movement and, later, in the Scottish Parliament (e.g., Johann Lamont, Maria Fyfe, Margaret Curran) (McCrae, 1991).

Involvement in single-issue campaigns also developed skills of organising and leadership. Scottish women were heavily involved in the massive campaigns organized in the 1980s around the national miners' strike and the 'poll tax' protests (Browne, 2014). In addition, many feminists in Scotland focused on single-issue campaigns in favour of reproductive rights and in opposition to violence against women; while others joined the anti-apartheid movement or focused on anti-nuclear protests at the Faslane submarine base (Hersh, 1991). One of these anti-nuclear activists was Nicola Sturgeon, later leader of the SNP and Scottish First Minister (Torrance 2015). However, participation in one campaign did not rule out participation in other campaigns – so helping to develop a radical habitus (Crossley, 2003).

Nevertheless, according to Isobel Lindsay, one of the leading women in the SNP (who left the party in order to participate in the Scottish Constitutional Convention), women's *political* involvement in the 1980s was inspired primarily by the opportunities offered by the campaign for devolution. According to Lindsay, 'it was the prospect of a new and more open debate on constitutional change which became the catalyst for a more radical and assertive response to the issue of women's representation in public life' (Lindsay, 1991:8). Such demands for political representation from the women's movement, when conjoined with the campaign for greater democracy in Scotland, would provide the necessary conditions for the eventual emergence of women in positions of political leadership.

### **The point of conjuncture: the coming together of the campaign for a Scottish Parliament and the women's movement in Scotland.**

As noted above, the Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC) was set up in 1989 to enact the Claim of Right. The Claim of Right, which had been published the previous year, included nothing targeted specifically at women, although five women were members of the Steering Committee of 18 that drafted it<sup>6</sup> (Dudley Edwards, 1989: 2). Similarly, the Convention itself was heavily male dominated

(Levy 1992): according to Maria Fyfe (Labour MP<sup>7</sup> and SCC Executive Committee member), 22 women and 173 men attended the first meeting (Fyfe, 2014). However, following protests about gender imbalance, and in order to put women's issues on the SCC's agenda, Labour members of the Convention's Executive set up a Women's Issues Working Group, with Fyfe as convener (Fyfe, 2014). These were spaces in which individuals with specific field capital (e.g., academics, social activists, journalists) could interact. However, the election of Fyfe provides some indication that politicians – those with a political habitus, incorporating a history of agonistic politics – would take over the leading positions if - or when - the political space was transformed into a political field.

One of the main submissions to the SCC came from the Scottish Trades Union Congress Women's Committee ('Women's Issues and the Scottish Assembly', 1989; in Paterson, 1998: 192-193). This submission included recommendations for family-friendly working time in the new parliament, for the provision of childcare facilities, and for 50/50 male/female representation (similar demands had been formulated at the WLM conferences in the 1970s: see Breitenbach 1990).

Meanwhile, A Woman's Claim of Right in Scotland (WCRS), a co-operative of academics and activists (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Collie, Hoare and Roddick, 1991), was set up in 1989 'out of a kind of desperation at the failure of Scottish political institutions to take the opinions and aspirations of women seriously' (Galloway and Robertson, 1991:1). This group produced a manifesto, 'A Woman's Claim of Right in Scotland' (1991), challenging the 'old' 'macho' party politics and stating a preference for a more co-operative and consensus-based politics (Galloway and Robertson, 1991). However, one contributor, Isobel Lindsay, noted that some feminists wanted to challenge the power structures preventing women from attaining the 'higher reaches of decision-making in society', with the implication that women should not be excluded – or self-excluded - from leadership positions (Lindsay, 1991: 9).

In this context, the first-past-the-post electoral system used for Westminster elections was considered by supporters of women's representation to deter women – potentially lacking the requisite political habitus - from standing in winnable parliamentary seats (Beckwith, 1992). The issue of the appropriate electoral system was a matter of debate in the SCC. Labour representatives were initially

unwilling to risk potential domination of a new Parliament by adopting a proportional system that would allow greater representation of smaller parties. However, the Scottish Greens, inspired by the Green Party in Germany, whose success was attributable to the Additional Member System (AMS), advocated AMS for Scotland (Levy, 1992). This system allows parties to draw up lists of candidates to be allocated Parliamentary seats depending on the strength of the 'list vote', the 'list' being in addition to those candidates selected at geographical constituency level (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). As operated in Germany, AMS had been successful in increasing women's representation and so in electing women to positions in the Green Party's leadership (in 1984 the German Greens were led by a five-woman executive board).

A third pressure group, the Women's Coordinating Group (WCG), 'a diverse coalition of women's organizations, grassroots activists, female trade unionists, party women and gender experts' (Kenny, 2013), was set up to raise awareness of the need for a feminised 'new politics' in Scotland. Members of this group possessed forms of capital acquired in diverse, relatively-open, fields, but were able to operate co-operatively in proposing a 'new politics'.

In 1991, for example, a WCG roundtable at the University of Edinburgh deemed the current political system 'inaccessible' and 'hostile to women'; noting in particular 'the aggressive, confrontational style in which the two party system is often played out in British politics, the pomp and ceremony surrounding the Westminster Parliament, and the discriminatory attitudes to women and practices of the "men's club"' (Brown and Strachan, 1991: 212). Participants also questioned whether 'the approach of women to politics is... different, less aggressive, more consensual?' (in Paterson, 1998: 213). So once again, the women's movement called into question forms of antagonistic political leadership and 'masculine' politics (albeit in opposition to a woman leader, Margaret Thatcher – one of history's cunning tricks). The main focus of this group was on changing the normative habitus, hexis and practices, but there was an absence of consideration as to how political antagonisms would be contained and channelled: that is, issues of party politics and political leadership were not addressed.

As a result of these interventions, however, the Convention's first report, 'Towards Scotland's Parliament: Report to the Scottish People' published in 1990, included the following statement:

‘Of particular and pressing concern is the failure of the British political system to face the issue of women's representation...The new Parliament provides the opportunity for a new start and the Convention is determined that positive action will be taken to allow women to play their full and equal part in the political process’ (in Paterson and McCrone, 1992: 91).

The result of these campaigns, interventions and submissions was that, according to Maidie Hart of SCOW, 'Women had got in at the ground floor for once' (quoted in Levy, 1992: 68). Women would thus be able to influence the constitution of democratic politics in ways that would enable greater women's participation – preparing the ground as it were, although this was not an explicit aim, for women to take on the role of political leadership.

At any rate, by 1994, it was clear that the UK General Election, due in 1997, would be won by Labour, and that the party's commitment to Scottish devolution meant that the SCC's recommendations would be put into practice as soon as possible after the election. In anticipation, the SCC set up an Independent Commission of 'eleven eminent Scots', chaired by journalist and human rights campaigner Joyce McMillan, to report on electoral systems and gender balance (academic Alice Brown was also a member) (Scottish Constitutional Convention 1995).

This Commission reported back to the SCC in 1994, and in October 1995 the SCC's executive committee published 'Key Proposals for Scotland's Parliament'. This included recommendations that there should be equal numbers of men and women members of the first Parliament; that the Additional Vote System should be adopted; and that a target (but not a quota) for the representation of ethnic minorities should be set. The acceptance of these recommendations would be the key step in preparing the way for women's increased participation in politics and ultimately their accession to leadership roles.

These recommendations were codified in the SCC's final report, 'Scotland's Parliament. Scotland's Right', published in 1995. The report concluded: 'From this process we have emerged with the

powerful hope that the coming of a Scottish parliament will usher in a way of politics that is radically different from the rituals of Westminster: more participative, more creative, less needlessly confrontational' (in Cairney and Johnston, 2012: 102). The argument for a non-confrontational, consensus-based politics had also been won (at least at this time). According to Crick and Millar (1995) ('To make the parliament of Scotland a model for democracy'): 'the hope of the Convention (was) that a Scottish parliament could operate in a more consensual manner than Westminster, somewhat as the Convention itself operated' (in Paterson, 1998: 241).

So, as noted above, by working in a consensual way – and in the absence of 'great men' leaders and of agonistic politics - the SCC had produced a blueprint for a devolved parliament and this blueprint was already in place when Labour won the UK General Election in 1997. As noted above, Labour's election manifesto included a commitment to devolve certain powers to Scotland (and Wales). Consequently, proposals a devolved parliament were put to the Scottish people in a referendum and, following an affirmative vote, elections to a new parliament were held.

### **The formation of the political field: women in the Scottish parliament 1999-2015**

The first election to the new devolved Scottish parliament took place in 1999. In terms of women candidates, Scottish Labour presented a 50/50 gender-balanced list. The SNP conference (in 1998) had voted down a proposal for a gender-balancing mechanism, while the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives opposed such 'positive discrimination outright (Mackay and Kenny 2007). However, as predicted, in practice women were advantaged by the additional member system. Consequently, of the 129 MSPs elected, 48 were women (37.2%), a result that has been characterised as a 'gender coup' that laid the foundations for women to gain political experience and, eventually, to emerge as leaders (Mackay, Myers and Brown, 2003).

Nevertheless, all four major party leaders in the first Parliament were men, all formed in the UK political field. Consequently, 'normal' Westminster-style antagonistic politics took over (with the dominant hexis of men in suits). However, subsequent parliaments (2003, 2007, 2011, 2016) have seen six women elected as party leaders. These are, for Labour: Wendy Alexander, Johann Lamont,

and Kezia Dugdale; Conservative: Annabel Goldie and Ruth Davidson; and SNP: Nicola Sturgeon. Four of these were first elected as MSPs in the ‘gender coup’ of 1999, namely Sturgeon, Alexander, Lamont and Goldie; while Davidson and Dugdale were elected in 2011. Sturgeon, Goldie, Dugdale and Davidson were all first elected as ‘list’ members.

The percentage of women MSPs increased to a high of 39.5% in 2003. As of 2016 there are 45 women MSPs (34.9 per cent), the same percentage as in 2011 (all statistics from Davidson, 2016). For the 2016 election, the SNP introduced all-women shortlists in constituencies with retiring SNP MSPs. As a result, 43 per cent of SNP MSPs elected in 2016 were women (compared to 27.5 per cent in 2011). In the case of Labour, 46 per cent of the party’s MSPs are (as of 2016) women. However, overall, Labour lost seats in 2016 while the Scottish Conservatives gained seats. The Conservatives were now (2016) the second largest party in the parliament: however only 19% of their MSPs were women, while the Liberal Democrats had no women MSPs (from a total of five), and the Greens one (from a total of six). Nevertheless, the opening of the new field has extended the political space that women can enter, including those previously ‘self-excluded’. As Johann Lamont states: ‘Despite spending two decades as a party activist, I never sought election to the House of Commons during that time... I felt there were few chances then for women to be elected to Westminster’ (in Pettigrew, 2014).

As noted above, the standing orders for the new parliament stated that ‘the arrangements for the operation of the Parliament should be equally attractive to men and women’. In addition, the building itself was designed to promote consensual and co-operative political practices: the architect Enric Miralles’s ‘intellectual vision was for a unique institution - open, anti-classical and non-hierarchical. The architecture that expressed this was to be de-institutionalised, aggregated, and organic - embracing the landscape and defying all the canonical rules of architectural composition’ (Jencks, 2005).

For the debating chamber, Miralles designed a non-confrontational space with seats arranged in a gentle arc. However, the MSPs themselves did not like the non-confrontational design: ‘It became evident that the MSPs enjoyed a much more confrontational style of debate... They wanted a version

of Westminster' (Building.co.uk, 2001). The shape of the chamber was therefore – at considerable cost – changed, in order to promote what McMillan, one of those responsible for drawing up the standing orders, calls 'the political theatre of First Minister's Questions' (quoted in Cairney and Johnston, 2013). First Minister's Questions is the occasion of the weekly 'duel' between the First Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. As First Minister (2014-present) Nicola Sturgeon has therefore taken part in clashes with Johann Lamont; with Lamont's successor Kezia Dugdale; and with Ruth Davidson<sup>8</sup>. Similar confrontations have also taken place during set-piece TV debates: for example the Sturgeon-Lamont 'stairheid rammie'<sup>9</sup> during the 2014 independence referendum. Although Lamont stated that, 'I thought it demeaned us both. It was horrible to be part of' (in Pettigrew, 2014), we might argue that the dominant logic of the political field called up this kind of struggle for domination and the political habitus over-ruled gender solidarity here.

Before the formation of the field, the SNP was primarily a tight-knit extra-parliamentary activist group (Mitchell and Hassan, 2016) that maintained a peripheral position in the UK political field. It was only with the formation of the new political field that it became a political party competing with the Labour and Conservative parties in Scotland. In 1994, the difficulty caused by its political leadership being in London (Alex Salmond) while its membership was in Scotland was addressed by appointing a full-time chief executive to run the party as an organisation in Scotland (Russell, 2016). In terms of leadership then, the SNP moved from a campaigning group with a symbolic leader, vested with personal political capital (Winnie Ewing in 1973); to a combination of a professional manager (formally, a national convener, appointed by the party) supporting a formally-elected leader, one whose political authority is delegated by the party. As a personification of the party, the leader is invested with the role of 'safeguarding and reproducing the political organization itself' as well as 'capturing the hearts and minds of the electorate and representing their interests' (Swartz 2013).

However, over the history of the Scottish parliament the political field has moved from one dominated by Labour, albeit without an overall majority in 1999 and 2003, through a period of SNP minority government 2007-11, until the SNP gained an overall majority in 2011. This last event, which confirmed the SNP's dominance of the field, meant that an independence referendum could take place



in 2014. The result of this was ‘Yes’ to independence, 48%; ‘No’, 55%. Following this result, Alex Salmond, the leader of the SNP, resigned, and was replaced as leader by Nicola Sturgeon who thereby became the first woman to occupy the position of First Minister of Scotland.

### **Women as leaders in the political field in Scotland**

The history we present shows how two social movements came together: first, the constitutional movement campaigning for a Scottish Parliament; and secondly, the women’s movement in Scotland, intervening to shape the new political field in ways that would promote women’s interests and participation. Both movements were based on the socio-political imaginary of an egalitarian, social democratic Scotland standing against a ‘Thatcherite’ neoliberal England (Cairney and McGarvey, 2013). Through devolving power to Scotland, the Labour party and the wider Labour movement hoped to counter both Thatcherite hegemony and the growth of the independence movement in Scotland. This ‘national’ solution was a response to problems posed in the UK political field: that is, a problem for the British Labour party in the UK (Conservative domination) would be solved by the creation of a Scottish political field that would perpetuate the domination of Labour in a more autonomous Scotland.

However, Thatcherism presented a political challenge not only to the Scottish Labour establishment but also to Scottish civic society and the fragmenting women’s movement in Scotland. Activists whose social trajectories included participation in the women’s movement (and learning through it) were involved in this ferment (understood as the ‘double democratic deficit’, see Fyfe, 2014), as were those whose radical habitus had been developed in the anti-nuclear campaigns and the wider Labour movement. These activists were able put their experiences and their organizing practices at the service of a ‘new politics’ that would empower women politically and socially. That is, the disintegration of the WLM as such saw feminist activists dispersing into new areas of action, bringing feminist perspectives into play.

Constitutional campaigners also took on board theoretical positions developed by feminists in the academic field (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993: 57ff), in particular ideas of ‘feminised’ politics as co-

operative and consensual (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). This ‘feminised’ approach to politics, if introduced in Scotland, would, it was believed, contrast positively with the Westminster parliament’s confrontational and aggressively masculine gender regime (Kenny, 2013).

However, the radical habitus could only get so far: the political habitus was also required. That is, social and civic society movements could not of themselves attain their end: political parties were also necessary. Before Scottish devolution in 1998, the UK political field was structured around the acquisition of high political capital through representation in the UK parliament, with Westminster - and ultimately governmental power - as the central pole of the political hierarchy. However, the campaign for a Scottish parliament provided a political space in which social groups and political parties could converge to work towards new institutional arrangements and practices that would promote women’s participation in public life. And this point of consensus was easier to obtain given the self-exclusion of the Conservatives and the SNP from the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention.

Thus, in the run-up to the 1998 Scottish election, the political field expanded, and what had been a relatively closed field was opened up. This meant a quantitative extension of political space, although this space offered lower political capital vis-à-vis Westminster. However, because of this, the Holyrood parliament allowed greater ease of access for those lacking the social and cultural capital required for entry into the UK political field, women in particular. This expansion of the political field therefore meant that new routes became possible to overcome the imposed or self-imposed exclusion of women from the closed and male-dominated field (compare the EU parliament as a route into French politics for women: see Kauppi, 1999).

For example, Johann Lamont, a future leader of the Labour Party, was formed politically by municipal feminism: ‘Johann played a significant role in this. She became chair of the party and she was very influential in that. She created a lot of change around all-women shortlists’ (Margaret Curran quoted in Shannon, 2014). Nicola Sturgeon was an anti-nuclear campaigner and young SNP activist (Torrance 2015); while three of the women worked as special advisors (SPADS), Alexander at Westminster, and Davidson and Dugdale in Scotland. However, Dugdale is the only direct entrant into

the political field (university, SPAD, MSP). With the exception of Goldie, all of the women were socialised into the field by more experienced mentors, undergoing a form of apprenticeship as political leaders by taking on party functionary roles: thus accumulating social capital within the political field while also becoming visible outside the party, in and through the media. At this point, the leader's person becomes a focus of intensive collective effort by a 'leadership group... a small trusted group of senior figures' (Russell 2016: 40) but also involving the wider support of image consultants, communications experts, polling experts, and political advisers of various sorts. These contemporary leaders operate in the context of a mediatised politics, where politicians need to project confidence and authenticity, get key messages across and 'win' televised debates (Pike, 2015 provides an insider view of how this works in his account of the 2014 Scottish referendum campaign and the UK General Election of 2015). In this context, the person of the 'leader' is a symbol, a personification even, of the greater party political project.

However, as Bourdieu (2005: 35) contends, 'politics is a struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division... the one that is dominant and recognized as deserving to dominate'. Political fields are therefore dynamic, they are 'fields of battle', with relational and contending positions, what amounts to a system of 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 2000). So political leaders, as representatives of their parties must take up confrontational rather than consensual political positions. This is what Bourdieu calls the 'field effect': i.e., the polarisation of the political field itself calls up differentiated positions and political dispositions suited to those positions.

We can now see how the absence of the SNP and the Conservatives from the deliberations of the SCC facilitated a consensual style of decision-making. In the absence of a political field in Scotland and so of political leadership, there was a vacant political space that could be occupied by civic society campaigners and women's movement activists, what we have called a proto-field of power. The decision in 1998 by the Conservatives and the SNP to take part in the election for the new parliament therefore signalled the foundation of the political field itself as such. It also meant that, given that the SNP and Labour were now competing to occupy – and so dominate from – the same social-democratic pole of the field, the SNP's aim *had to be* to overcome the Labour Party's domination in Scotland,

and the SNP and its leadership ultimately did so by imposing their vision of the world on a reconfigured political field after the 2014 independence referendum.

That is, the SNP's aim before and to an even greater extent after the 2014 referendum was to reconfigure the political field around the 'Yes/No' (to independence) distinction, rather than, say, around class, so that *nationalist/unionist* would become the dominant principle of di-vision in the field. As Brubaker (1996: 212) notes: "nationalizing states" are states that are conceived by their dominant elites as nation-states, as the states of and for particular nations, yet as "incomplete" or "unrealized" nation-states, as insufficiently "national" in a variety of senses'. So, as the newly dominant 'national' party, the SNP could invade Labour's political space, dominate the political field and so start to bring into being the 'nationalizing state' itself (and aiming at an independent Scotland). This process was facilitated by the resignation of Alex Salmond and his replacement as leader – elected unopposed – by Nicola Sturgeon and then by the UK General Election of 2015, in which Labour lost all but one of its Scottish seats to the SNP.

But this 'nationalising' process is only part of the story: part of 'a paradigm shift in the way civil life in Scotland is perceived', including issues of gender and sexuality (Miller et al., 2010: 278). For example, Wendy Alexander, as Communities Minister in the first Scottish government, played a leading role in the repeal of the anti-homosexual Section 28 in 2000 in the face of strong extra- and intra-parliamentary opposition, particularly from traditionalist Christians. At the time, Alexander claimed that repealing the act was a way of 'building a tolerant Scotland' (Alexander, 2000<sup>10</sup>), and now 16 years later, of the three women leaders two are Lesbian while the leader of the Greens is gay<sup>11</sup>. This enormous change in Scottish politics and society is, we might say, the result of 'a debate which took place through individuals and collectives, between institutions, across extended tracts of space and time' (Miller et al., 2010: 283), against a background of processes of social change, such as the end of heavy industry, the changing role of male-dominated trade unions, the exploitation of North Sea oil, the secularisation of Scotland and the decline of church authority (Hassan and Shaw, 2012) – with the result that what was once unimaginable is now accepted and unremarkable. As Cameron (2016) notes: 'Sturgeon comes from a country where female leadership has become normalised'.

However, one great irony of recent Scottish history is that it was the SNP, which, having refused to participate in the consensus-based SCC and which, before the 2014 Independence referendum, had appealed more to men than to women voters (Johns and Mitchell, 2016), ended up benefiting most from the newly-formed field. And it was the SNP that went on to elect Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister who, in turn, went on to appoint a 50/50 gender-balanced cabinet in 2016 with the explicit aim of providing leadership role models for young women to enter the political field.

In this new context, with women as political leaders now normalised, new questions – and tensions – arise concerning the interrelation between political leaders, gender and mediatisation (see, e.g., Cameron and Shaw, 2016): how women leaders negotiate these tensions is beyond the scope of this study, but might provide fruitful areas for further research. In particular, we identify two main issues for the next stages of our research programme on women political leaders in Scotland: (1) archival research and oral history interviews focused on the contribution of the civil society movements to the ‘new politics’, and (2) contemporary issues of gender and leadership, mediatisation and corporal hexis in relation to women leaders and how these are negotiated in the reconfigured field of power in Scotland and beyond.

These are issues of interest to us. As business school academics at Scottish universities we have a stake in the field of leadership studies, in particular critical leadership studies, and are also inescapably affected by the new configurations of politics and the field of power in Scotland (Kerr and Robinson, 2016). Both authors have recently moved to Scotland, one of us returning after a long period of absence. Our present interest in contemporary leadership, in particular in relation to power and emergent processes of organisation and change, has directed us to the past in order to understand where we are now in relation and the changes in society, culture and politics that have enabled the emergence of women leaders. As Weber (1949) argues, what the social scientist focuses on is driven by her or his values and interests: ‘There is no absolutely ‘objective’ scientific analysis of culture or... of ‘social phenomena’ independent of special and ‘one-sided’ viewpoints according to which-- expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously--they are selected, analysed and organized for

expository purposes'. What is considered 'worth knowing', Weber concludes, 'depends upon the perspective of the inquiring scholar' (Weber, 1949: 72).

### **Conclusions**

In this paper, we addressed a singular historical event, the arrival of women as political leaders of the three main political parties in the Scottish parliament. We addressed this event by using Bourdieu's field theory, looking in particular at the formation of a political field in Scotland in the period 1979-present. We argued that, in the 1980s, Thatcherism opened up a political space (not yet a political field), that unwittingly called up opposition and provided room for manoeuvre for social movements, including feminism, civic society groups, and political parties. With the convergence of the Campaign for a Scottish Parliament and the women's movement, feminist ideas from the academic field could be adopted and put into practice in planning the new parliament, although the attempts to introduce quotas and enforce a 50/50 ratio were unsuccessful (largely due to Liberal and Green opposition: see Fyfe, 2014).

However, the new political field formed after 1999 offered more opportunities for women to be involved in politics and to rise to leadership positions. Applying the concept of the political field thus allowed us to understand this special case in which nationalism, feminism and democratic politics came together in a new political configuration. We showed how organisational practices and the radical habitus developed in and by the WLM and other social movements (e.g., working in campaigning groups; working on collaborative publishing and distribution; transferring ideas from the academic field) contributed to the formation of a new political field and to increased opportunities for political action by women.

The simultaneous emergence of women political leaders signals the naturalisation of gender as a political leadership issue in Scotland; but to understand how this occurred, rather than trying to identify general laws of psychology and history, we need to focus on socio-historical explanations before homing onto the context in which specific leaders emerge and operate. That there can be no

political leaders without a political field is a tautology, but understanding the structuring and historical development of the field explains why women leaders have emerged. However, none of this was predictable, none of it was dependent on the appearance of one or two ‘special’ individuals. The emergence of leaders is time-bound and contextual, its conditions of possibility are historically specific and cannot be isolated and tested.

The contributions of this study to, and implications for, leadership studies concern the value of field theory in researching leadership (Kerr and Robinson, 2011). The Scottish women leaders did not appear fully formed; their conditions of possibility as leaders resulted from collective action over time by innumerable individuals organising in campaigns and social movements, in the context of wider social and economic changes. In fact, the campaigns and social movements did not have as an explicit aim the naturalisation of women as political leaders, and in the case of the WLM were opposed to the idea of leadership in itself. These people were working towards varied and even contradictory ends, driven by ideas such as democracy, equality, the nation, and the political solutions that eventuated had further unforeseen consequences; the event being, we might say, overdetermined. That is,

‘history is so made that the end-result always arises out of the conflict of many individual wills, in which every will is itself the product of a host of special conditions of life. Consequently there exist innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite group of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant product – the historical event’ (Engels, 1890/1934).

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<sup>1</sup> This call, is we believe, particularly timely, given the methodological and epistemological issues raised by the ‘replication crisis’ in psychology and by extension in mainstream psychology-based leadership research (Spoelstra, Butler & Delaney 2016).

<sup>2</sup> For a concise and comprehensive overview of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework (field, forms of capital, habitus, hexis, illusio, doxa) see Gorski (2013b).

<sup>3</sup> The Yearbook’s online archive can be freely accessed at:

[http://www.scottishgovernmentyearbooks.ed.ac.uk/record/23041?highlight=\\*](http://www.scottishgovernmentyearbooks.ed.ac.uk/record/23041?highlight=*)

<sup>4</sup> In 1997 120 women MPs were elected, 18.2% of all MPs: 101 were Labour, 13 Conservative and 3 Liberal Democrat.

<sup>5</sup> It was signed by 58 of Scotland’s 72 Members of Parliament, 7 of Scotland’s 8 MEPs, 59 out of 65 Scottish councils, political parties, churches and other organizations, e.g., trade unions.

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<sup>6</sup> Sandra Farquhar, Women's Aid: Joy Hendry, Editor of 'Chapman'; Isobel Lindsay, Sociologist; Una MacLean, University of Edinburgh; Judy Steel, Cultural Festival Organizer.

<sup>7</sup> When elected in 1987, Fyfe was the only woman Labour MP in Scotland; there were 49 men (Fyfe 2014).

<sup>8</sup> The Scottish parliament TV website archives all parliamentary sessions.

<sup>9</sup> Roughly translated as 'a loud argument in a tenement stairwell'.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?id=2000-06-21.592.0>

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.lgbthistoryscotland.org.uk/>